



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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National Park Service News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – DECEMBER 10, 2007
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“Holiday in the National Parks” Celebrated at the White House Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Ornament Displayed on the Official White House Christmas Tree

(Cottonwood Falls, Kansas) – An ornament of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is prominently displayed on this year’s official White House Christmas Tree. The tree is the centerpiece of elaborate decorations celebrating the theme of “Holiday in the National Parks.”

“It is an amazing honor for the National Park Service to be selected as the theme for the White House holiday decorations by the President and Mrs. Bush,” said National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar. “Mrs. Bush is the best champion for our national parks, and the beautiful decorations in each state room showcase the natural and historical treasures found in parks throughout the country.”

The tree, located in the Blue Room, is adorned with handmade ornaments representing the country’s 391 National Park Service sites. “Each ornament on the magnificent 18-foot Fraser fir was designed by an artist selected by the park,” said Bomar. “The ornaments tell the stories of our parks, just as our parks tell the stories of our nation.”

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve’s ornament depicts the historic ranch headquarters, including the majestic ranch house and barn on one side and a panoramic view of the prairie on the other. The ornament was designed and hand painted by well-known and local Chase County artist Judy Mackey.

The holiday displays incorporate the wide variety of natural, cultural, and recreational features preserved by the National Park Service. Models of icons such as the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the Statue of Liberty share space with paintings of scenic vistas from Grand Canyon, Zion, and Rocky Mountain National Parks. Holiday garlands intertwined with park objects including seashells, pine cones, and gold aspen leaves add to each room’s festive feel.

A highlight of the decorations is a scaled-down, but architecturally accurate, gingerbread reproduction of the south view of the White House, a unit of the National Park Service. The edible masterpiece includes Bush family pets Barney, Miss Beazley, and Willie frolicking on the lawn with moose, elk, raccoons, and other animals found in national parks.

“National Parks commemorate the people, places, and events that define the American experience,” said Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne. “I am so appreciative of President

Bush's efforts to recognize the important role of national parks in American society. Our country will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016 and the President has been instrumental in establishing the National Park Centennial Initiative to prepare the parks for the next century."

For more information on the White House decorations, go to www.whitehouse.gov.

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is a public/private partnership with the National Park Service, The Nature Conservancy, and the Kansas Park Trust. Located two miles north of Strong City on Kansas State Highway 177 (the Flint Hills Scenic Byway), the preserve's historic ranch headquarters is open daily from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. For more information or to make group reservations, visit the preserve's website at www.nps.gov/tapr, e-mail tapr_interpretation@nps.gov, or call the preserve at (620) 273-6034.

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Artist Judy Mackey

Judy Mackey Original

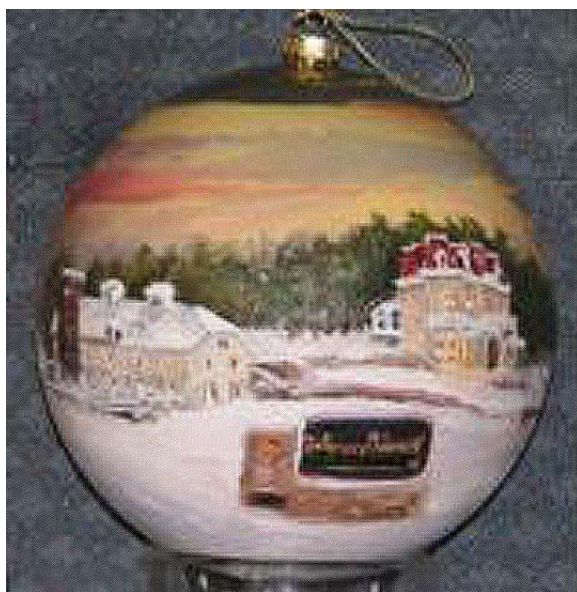


Image depicting the 1881 Spring Hill Ranch



Image depicting the tallgrass prairie at sunset